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ISSN 1480 – 6339

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Sponsors of Innovations

Publication has been made possible in part by grants and sponsorships provided by:

THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

DR. STANLEY DRABEK

Innovations would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance:

Dr. Gavin Cameron

Dr. Gretchen MacMillan

Mrs. Carol Murray

Dr. Pablo Policzer

Mrs. Judi Powell

Dr. Anthony Sayers

Mrs. Ella Wensel

Mr. Len Wilson

Innovations is registered with an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) at the National Library of Canada.

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Forward

On behalf of the Editorial Board of *Innovations: A Journal of Politics*, it gives us great pleasure to welcome readers to our Spring 2004-2005 edition. *Innovations* is an interdisciplinary, refereed journal committed to publishing the finest student work in politics. The articles contained in this edition reflect this commitment and offer four examples of exemplary scholarship.

The first article, by Jessica West, *Feminist IR and the Case of the 'Black Widows': Reproducing Gendered Divisions*, investigates whether or not the practice of international relations produces a hegemonic femininity. By examining the popular portrayal of Chechen women terrorists commonly referred to as the 'Black Widows,' West argues that our interpretations of international events do indeed produce a hegemonic femininity that places women in the familial world of emotion and victimhood. She concludes that feminists should embrace their position on the margins of IR and the opportunity that it provides to destabilizing the hierarchies, exclusions and violence upon which it is based.

Following this, Tina Hilgers' article is entitled, *Mexican Labour Politics at a Critical Juncture*. This article reviews the current political situation of Mexican organized labour and the academic debate regarding unions' relevance to Mexican democracy, drawing attention to the importance of Federal Labour Law reform. Given labour's political weakness leading up to, and potential representational importance at, the 1997 Mexican parliamentary elections, Hilgers suggests that participation of both official and independent labour working to craft Federal Labour Code reform provides an important reference point for studies of the quality of Mexican democracy.

In *Composite Diplomacy: Canadian Innovation Amidst Global Uncertainty*, Robert Sean Barrett investigates the Western world's apparent and disturbing inability to address and ameliorate emerging forms of global intrastate war. He highlights Canada's dire need to resurrect its foreign policy in order to actively participate on the world stage. Addressing both of these problems, Barrett proposes that Canada adopt a policy of a newly formed diplomatic strategy termed *Composite Diplomacy*.

Finally, in his *Political Friendship and the Second Self in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, Francis Vander Valk suggests that the assumption of a group of contemporary commentators, termed 'Strong Integrationists', err in their more-or-less Cartesian understanding of the self in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The author counters that the Aristotelian-self is generally unstable, fractured, and only rarely capable of the sustained virtue that characterizes the highest form of friendship. By reexamining the nature of the Aristotelian-self the author provides a reading of political friendship that is more faithful to Aristotle's text, and more in line with his own philosophical assumptions.

The production of this journal would not be possible without the generosity of our sponsors and the Department of Political Science at the University of Calgary. On behalf of the Editorial Board, we would like to recognize and give thanks for all their support. This forward would not be complete if we did not thank the anonymous reviewers who generously gave their time and

effort in reviewing the many articles considered for publication. Their efforts, along with those of our many dedicated volunteers, gave us the ability to raise the 2005 edition of *Innovations* off the ground.

Sincerely,

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&

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Notes on Contributors

Jessica West holds an MA in International Affairs from the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA) at Carleton University. Her research interests include gender studies, conflict analysis and international relations in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Tina Hilgers is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at York University. Her research interests include Latin American democratization, organized labour, and social movements.

Robert Barrett is a PhD student at the University of Calgary's Centre for Military and Strategic Studies. His research interests include inter-group conflict, democratization, and strategic intervention in ethno-political war.

Francis Vander Valk is an Assistant Professor of Politics and Western Civilization at Empire State College. His research interests include concepts of political friendship, cognitive theory, and postmodern political thought.